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Commissioner for Patents

REMARKS

Claims 1-20 remain in the application.

Claims 1 and 13 are herein amended.

In Item III.3 of the Office Action dated March 24, 2006, the Examiner maintains his rejection of claim 1 as being anticipated by Cates (U.S. Patent No. 2,902,101). More specifically, the Examiner states that the amendment to claim 1 in the Office Action response dated January 19, 2006 does not distinguish over Cates..

Accordingly, claim 1 is currently amended so as to bring further limitations that enable claim 1 to distinguish over Cates. The Applicant adds that the Cates conveyor cannot go in a downward direction on a flight of stairs if the projecting arm labeled as 52 is deployed.

The Examiner also cites Carstens (U.S. Patent No. 6,336,642). The Applicant argues that the safety device for stair-climbing systems described by Carstens, whether combined to Cates or taken individually, fails to teach the subject matter of claim 1. Referring to Fig. 2 of Carstens, it is seen that the support arm 30 is pivotally mounted to the mounting system 20. As supported by line 7 of column 5 of Carstens, the "*support arm 30 is mounted freely rotating*". This is required so as to have the support feet 31 on the stepping surface of a stair as illustrated in Fig. 4, so as to prevent downward motion of the Carstens device down a flight of stairs.

Additionally, Carstens is absent of numerous limitations of claim 1, such as the endless track. When combined to Cates, both references teach a device blocking downward motion of the respective conveyors down flights of stairs. Therefore, claim 1 is deemed to patentably distinguish over Cates and/or Carstens individually or combined.

As for the Takashi reference, it is pointed out that the element labeled as 32 in Fig. 1 is a controller handle that is not destined to be used as an anti-roll device. The controller handle 32 is pivotable along axis X whereby it would not prevent the roll of the Takashi conveyor. Moreover, the relatively small overall length of the controller handle when compared to the Takashi conveyor points to the fact that it cannot be used as an anti-roll device.

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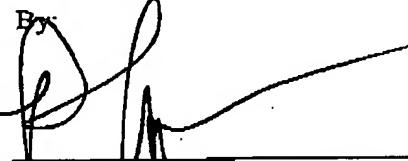
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In Item III.4, the Examiner rejects claim 13 by the combination of Cates and Thunell (U.S. Patent No. 4,278,395). More specifically, the Examiner seeks support from Thunell for a roller adjacent to the support surface, which subject matter is not present in Cates. The Applicant herein amends claim 13 to bring additional limitations not taught by Cates or Thunell, whether taken individually or in combination. Claim 13 is deemed to patentability distinguish over the prior art.

In view of the above amendments and remarks, this application is now considered to be in condition for allowance, and early notice to that effect is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,
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(Date)